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# Public Health Reports.

(Formerly "Abstract of Sanitary Reports.")

Treasury Department, United States Marine-Hospital Service. Published in accordance with act of Congress approved February 15, 1893.

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## UNITED STATES

[Reports to the Supervising Surgeon-General United States Marine-Hospital Service.]

### *Report on a case of smallpox in Memphis, Tenn.*

MEMPHIS, TENN., November 7, 1896.

SIR: I have the honor to report the occurrence of a case of smallpox in this city in the person of a white child 3 years old. The case presents several very interesting and unusual features. In the first place, the child was vaccinated about two years ago with, it is stated, a very successful result. The second matter of interest relates to the mode of infection. The child's parents are well-to-do people, and are boarding in the residential part of the city, rather on the edge of town. The owner of the house in which the child is boarding is a contractor, and last winter erected the county pesthouse, and was certainly more or less about the patients. He denies this, but as he had previously had smallpox there is every reason to believe that he was careless and was more or less exposed without thinking of it.

His winter clothes and overcoat have been hanging all summer in a closet, and when the boarders moved in recently these articles were allowed to remain in the closet and the child's clothing hung in juxtaposition to the overcoat, etc.

At least seven months must have intervened since the last possible exposure of the contractor's clothing—possibly longer—and the exposure of the child to infection therefrom. There has been no smallpox in the city for seven or eight months and there is no other source of infection possible other than the contractor's clothing. Doubtless the child was hyper-sensitive to infection. The contracting the disease after recent successful vaccination and from a source of infection presenting the poison in a (probably) very attenuated form all point to this. The confining of the clothing in a close closet doubtless also cuts a figure in the preservation for so long a time of the specific poison.

The case has been rigidly isolated, the house placarded, and vaccination is being pushed in the neighborhood. I therefore do not think it likely that there will be any more cases.

Very respectfully,

G. B. YOUNG,  
*Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*